

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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SUBJ: FURTHER REACTION TO US TRADE BILL

REF: BOGOTA 0131

1. BOGOTA DAILIES CONTINUE TO GIVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO THE US TRADE BILL. LIBERAL EL TIEMPO, ON PAGE ONE OF ITS JAN 8 EDITION, CARRIED A STORY ENTITLED "TEST OF US-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS". THE REPORT CHARACTERIZES THOSE RELATIONS AS HAVING ENTERED "A SENSITIVE TERRAIN OF TENSIONS AND CONFRONTATIONS" AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE NEW TRADE BILL. THE SAME STORY CASTS DOUBT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE "NEW DIALOGUE", AND REPORTS COLOMBIA'S SUPPORT FOR THE VENEZUELAN/ECUADORIAN PROPOSAL FOR AN OAS COUNCIL MEETING TO DECIDE IF THERE IS JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE "NEW DIALOGUE".

2. EL TIEMPO ALSO CARRIES AN AP REPORT CITING THE MISGIVINGS IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE USG OVER THE EFFECTS OF THE TRADE
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BILL PROVISIONS. THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY ARE REPORTED

AS CONCERNED WITH THE MATTER. THE SECRETARY IS QUOTED AS DEPLORING THE DISCRIMINATIONS CONTAINED IN THE TRADE BILL.

3. FONMIN LIEVANO HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE COLOMBIAN OAS AMB WILL SUPPORT THE VENEZUELAN PROPOSAL FOR A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL TO DISCUSS THE DISCRIMINATORY ASPECTS OF THE TRADE BILL. A MIN STATEMENT DESCRIBES THE MEETING AS APPROPRIATE SINCE IT WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE IF CONDITIONS ARE FAVORABLE FOR HOLDING THE FONMIN'S MEETING IN BUENOS AIRES. LIEVANO IS ALSO REPORTED AS ANNOUNCING THAT THE FOREIGN ADVISORY COMMISSION WILL MEET ON JAN 11 TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF CUBAN RELATIONS AND WILL CONSIDER THE US TRADE BILL ON JAN 13. (FONOFF OFFICIAL CONFIRMED LIEVANO'S STATEMENT ON THE OAS MEETING AND THE JAN 11 MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMISSION. THE SAME OFFICIAL, HOWEVER, SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF A SCHEDULED MEETING ON THE US TRADE BILL, ALTHOUGH HE REGARDED THE TOPIC AS ONE THE GROUP MIGHT WELL ADDRESS.)

4. PRESS STORIES TODAY MENTION THE FACT THAT COLOMBIA WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE OPEC PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE BILL AND CITE AMBASSADOR VAKY AS STATING THAT THE LAW WOULD NOT AFFECT COLOMBIAN PRODUCTS. THE SAME STORIES, HOWEVER, POINT OUT THE DANGER THAT PRODUCERS OF OTHER PRODUCTS (COFFEE) WHO TRY TO MAKE OPEC LIKE ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE PENALIZED IN THE FUTURE.

5. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, PRESIDENT LOPEZ, DURING A LENGTHY INTERVIEW WITH "CROMOS" MAGAZINE, ALSO EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT THE "NEW DIALOGUE". THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORTEDLY VIEWS THE MINISTERIAL TALKS AS UNDERMINING THE STRENGTH OF THE OAS. HE DEPLORED THE REPLACEMENT OF OAS DELIBERATIONS WITH A DIALOGUE WHOSE DATE AND PLACE ARE DETERMINED BY THE US SECRETARY OF STATE. LOPEZ SAID THAT IT WAS PREFERABLE TO OPERATE WITHIN THE CLUB, ABIDING BY THE STATUTORY RULES.

WHITE

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